

May 2008

WELCOME

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the ANU Integration Network. The aim of this newsletter is to share updates on events, visitors, activities, opportunities and resources related to research integration and inter- or trans- disciplinary.

We are pleased to report that the public lecture and book launch for *Uncertainty and Risk: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* was a great success! The summary below includes links to audio and video recordings of the event as well as links to related interviews and a "taster" from the book.

Please note that the ANU Integration Network will begin holding periodic meetings to discuss ways of enhancing research integration at the ANU. The series will be launched by Deputy Vice Chancellor Lawrence Cram on Wednesday, 2 July 2008 from 4-5 pm (location to be determined). Subsequent meetings will include coverage of topics such as practical guidelines for facilitating integrated research at ANU and the unique challenges faced by PhD students engaged in cross-disciplinary, problem-based research. We hope you will join us for these meetings.

Gabriele Bammer and Caryn Anderson

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NEWS & EVENTS

Thursday, 29 May 2008, 12.30-1.30 pm, Seminar: "Integration and Implementation Sciences: Concepts, Methods, Application", Professor Gabriele Bammer

Effectively tackling real-world problems requires a new type of researcher, who can enhance collaboration between discipline and practice experts. Such researchers need a solid foundation in a set of conceptual and methods skills, called Integration and Implementation Sciences (I2S).

I2S covers four domains, namely concepts and methods to enhance:

1. fresh thinking on intractable problems;
2. integration of disciplinary and stakeholder knowledge;
3. understanding and management of ignorance and uncertainty; and
4. the provision of research support for decision making and practice change.

I2S provides (a) the hub around which research institutions can organise teams to investigate real world problems, (b) a baseline level of quality for such work, (c) an avenue for transmitting new theory and methods between groups focusing on different real-world problems, and (d) a home for methodologies addressing recurrent concerns in tackling complex problems that are not the province of any discipline or practice area.

Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008

Time: 12.30-1.30 pm

Location: Bob Douglas Lecture Theatre, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (Building 62)

Thursday, 29 May 2008, 3-4.30 pm, Seminar: "Touch It and the Bloom is Gone: Understanding Ignorance", Professor Michael Smithson

This seminar presents an overview of my research program concerning human perspectives on the unknown. We examine ways of studying how people think about ignorance and uncertainty, how they represent it, and what they do with it. This topic draws on several disciplines and is at the heart of debates about "rationality". Moreover, ignorance and uncertainty have quite a few "positive" as well as "negative" roles in our mental and social lives.

Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008

Time: 3-4.30 pm

Location: Room 150, Psychology Link Building (Building 39) (first floor, up the main stairwell and then straight ahead).

Afterwards, attendees are invited to drinks and snacks in Room 217 (second floor) to continue discussions.

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SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, 2 July 2008, 4-5 pm, ANU Integration Network Meeting – presenter Lawrence Cram

ANU Deputy Vice Chancellor Lawrence Cram will kick off a 2008 series of meetings of the ANU Integration Network with a discussion of the ways to best “locate” integration research at The Australian National University. Subsequent meetings will include coverage of topics such as practical guidelines for facilitating integrated research at ANU and the unique challenges faced by PhD students engaged in cross-disciplinary, problem-based research. All ANU Integration Network members and guests are welcome.

Date: Wednesday, 2 July 2008

Time: 4-5 pm

Location: To Be Determined (on ANU campus)

RSVP: Caryn Anderson (caryn.anderson@anu.edu.au, (02) 6125 5621).

Cash bar available. Light snacks will be provided.

“Uncertainty” Public Lecture and Book Launch a Success

Over 130 academics, public servants, students and citizens assembled in the Finkel Theatre at The Australian National University on May 8 for “Risk, Uncertainty and the Future of National Security”, a public lecture by Michael Wesley, Professor of International Relations, Director of the Griffith Asia Institute at Griffith University, Program Leader of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security, and leader of the Australia 2020 panel focused on “Australia’s future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world” (<http://www.australia2020.gov.au/committee/>). Professor Wesley also launched the new volume edited by Professors Gabriele Bammer and Michael Smithson, *Uncertainty and Risk: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*.

ANU Deputy Vice Chancellor Lawrence Cram welcomed the large and diverse audience and introduced Professor Wesley, whose enthusiastic endorsement of the book supported his engaging description of the ways uncertainty figures into the scope of national security threats and risks to Australia and the region. Associate Professor Alison Ritter, Director of the Drug Policy Modelling Program, concluded the event with a vote of thanks for Professor Wesley and acknowledgement of the funding support from the Colonial Foundation Trust. The book is a product of the Drug Policy Modelling Program.

Professor Wesley’s lecture is available via the ANU Toyota Public Lecture Series (audio):

http://info.anu.edu.au/Discover_ANU/News_and_Events/Public_Lectures/Michael_Wesley.asp

It is also the first of the ANU public lectures to be made available via video through The Monthly Magazine’s slowTV: Part 1 – <http://www.themonthly.com.au/tm/node/976>; Part 2 – <http://www.themonthly.com.au/tm/node/975>.

The book is available from Earthscan (<http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?tabid=331>). Chapter 1 is available for download from the Integration and Implementation Sciences website:

http://www.anu.edu.au/iisn/index.php?action=uncertainty_book

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Integrating Research Across Disciplines – Students Welcome a New Graduate Course and Networking Opportunities

On the 29th of April, over a dozen ANU PhD students from disciplines ranging from medicine to physics to art to anthropology engaged in a stimulating conversation about the challenges and rich opportunities of multi-disciplinary research. The conversation hit upon many critical issues including (but not limited to):

- scoping research problems and setting boundaries effectively;
- communicating across disciplines (or sectors) with different vocabularies, assumptions, world views, theoretical bases, etc.;
- reconciling and integrating different methods or approaches;
- cultivating relationships with colleagues and/or mentors in other disciplines;
- determining what (and how much) needs to be learned from disciplines outside the primary research domain, and how to ask the right questions; and
- translating scientific knowledge into practice and policy.

The students agreed that there are two key tools that would prove useful for them in their investigations: a course focused on principles and techniques for cross-disciplinary research integration and student involvement in a network to facilitate communication among researchers doing integrative work. A subgroup of these students will be working with Professor Gabriele Bammer and Caryn Anderson to develop a graduate course in research integration. The activities of the ANU Integration Network will be strengthened to encompass greater student involvement and focus (see above).

New Conference Announcements

20-23 August 2008, Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

The conference is held jointly with European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST). (<http://www.4sonline.org/meeting.htm>)

27-28 November 2008, Transdisciplinarity Conference 2008: Inter- and Transdisciplinary Problem Framing, Zurich, Switzerland

(<http://www.transdisciplinarity.ch/newsmail/detail.php?id=1098>)

Upcoming Conference Reminders

8-11 June 2008, 2nd World Congress on Risk, Guadalajara, Mexico

(http://www.sra.org/events_2008_world_congress.php)

17-19 June 2008, 6th Annual CSIRO CSS Workshop, Brisbane

Contact Danielle Stevens for details and forms (Danielle.Stevens@csiro.au or Fax 02 6242 1677).

7-10 December 2008, 28th Society for Risk Analysis 2008 Annual Meeting, Boston, USA

(http://www.sra.org/events_2008_meeting.php)

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30 September – 1 October 2008, 3rd Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Chapter of the Society for Risk Analysis, Canberra, Australia
(<http://www.acera.unimelb.edu.au/sra/news.html>)

23-26 October 2008, 30th Annual Conference of the Association for Integrative Studies, Springfield, Illinois, USA
(http://www.units.muohio.edu/aisorg/Conference/conference_upcoming.shtml)

JOURNAL PROFILE

Journal of Research Practice

Journal of Research Practice (JRP) seeks to develop our understanding of research as a type of practice, so as to extend and enhance that practice in the future. The Journal aims to highlight the dynamics of research practice, as it unfolds in the life of a researcher, in the growth and decline of a field, and in relation to a changing social and institutional environment. The Journal welcomes deliberation on the basic issues and challenges encountered by researchers in any specific domain. The Journal aims to explore why and how different activities, criteria, methods, and languages become part of research practice in any domain. This is expected to trigger interdisciplinary dialogue, mutual learning, facilitate research education, and promote innovations in different fields.

"The Journal's scope is not defined in terms of academic disciplines. It cuts across disciplines and fields by drawing out the living dimensions of research unfolding through history, culture, research communities, professions, and of course the lives of individual researchers. The Journal seeks to study the evolving patterns of thinking and practice that underlie open inquiry in any domain. The scope also includes topics such as research training, research design, research utilisation, research policy, and innovative forms of research. The Journal targets all researchers, scholars, research-inclined professionals, and research students, irrespective of their disciplinary background. It seeks to attract reflective articles on the dynamics and challenges of research practice in context, as well as articles presenting experiences and learning from research carried out in an innovative way."

The *Journal of Research Practice* is published electronically in the "open access" mode in order to encourage the widest participation in these critical issues.

* Website: <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp>

* Impact factor: n/a

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PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

Society for Social Studies of Science

"The Society for Social Studies of Science exists to facilitate communication across conventional boundaries that separate the disciplines and across national boundaries that separate scholars.

4S includes:

- scholars in sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, political science, economics, and psychology
- areas of study that fall outside of the traditional academic disciplines such as feminist studies and cultural studies, as well as those addressing science and technology for the public
- studies of knowledge, policy, R&D, the development and use of specific technologies
- working scientists and engineers interested in the social aspects of their fields
- members of the public who have an interest in the way that science and technology affect their lives"

* Journal: *Science, Technology & Human Values*

* Website: <http://www.4sonline.org>

* Conference: The 2008 Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science will be held August 20-23 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands held jointly with European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST).

ABOUT ANU INTEGRATION NEWS

This newsletter aims to share updates on events, visitors, activities, opportunities and resources among ANU staff and students with an interest in research integration (or inter- or trans-disciplinarity). In addition to current information, each issue will also highlight a relevant journal and professional society.

Our aim for 2008 is to distribute the newsletter monthly. Back issues are available at www.anu.edu.au/iisn. To contribute material or to subscribe or unsubscribe from the newsletter, please contact Caryn Anderson at caryn.anderson@anu.edu.au.